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**STATEMENT BY UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
CHARLENE BARSHEFSKY AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE
OECD MINISTERIAL
PARIS, FRANCE**

At the conclusion of the two-day OECD Ministerial meeting in Paris, France, United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky stated, "We made considerable progress in advancing the President's economic agenda with our partners here in the OECD and I am pleased with the results of this important meeting, and the future agenda set for the OECD." One theme common to all of our discussions was the need for openness and transparency in economic activity - in policies and practices ranging from regulatory and financial reform to the operation of institutions like the OECD and WTO to ensure public confidence as we sustain economic growth.

"An important conclusion of our discussions this week was broad agreement that as we shape our future trade agenda, we must find a better way to answer the growing concerns and anxieties of ordinary people about trade. Without question, the international trading system must continue to reflect the values of, and thus win the support of citizens as it evolves to fit the economic world of the 21st century. The OECD has produced an excellent report on the benefits of trade and investment liberalization to help in the public debate." Further discussion of these and other key areas are outlined below.

Asia Financial Crisis

Ambassador Barshefsky welcomed the discussions of the Asia financial crisis, noting "the need for full and rapid implementation by the affected countries of the macroeconomic and structural reforms agreed to with the international financial institutions." In particular, Ambassador Barshefsky stated that "good governance and effective structural policies concerning financial systems, regulatory reform, and greater transparency are critical to enhancing economic performance." In this regard, Ambassador Barshefsky stated, "I am pleased with the new OECD

initiative to develop core standards and guidelines on corporate governance." She continued, "This is an area where further action is essential." With respect to the Japanese fiscal stimulus package, Ambassador Barshefsky noted that OECD countries look forward to "its quick and effective implementation." However, further actions to strengthen Japan's financial system and open and deregulate its economy remain essential in order to establish a sound basis for long-lasting domestic demand-led growth. All members of the OECD agreed that they should contribute to the Asian recovery with policies that sustain growth and domestic demand, and further open markets.

Transparency, Openness and Further Trade Liberalization in the WTO

A major issue at the ministerial this week was the importance of strengthening public confidence in the multilateral trading system and engaging our citizens in a public debate on the benefits of trade and investment liberalization. President Clinton repeatedly has emphasized that trade must be seen as one important component of a broader, more integrated set of policies aimed at raising living standards.

In this context, Ambassador Barshefsky said, "I note that we spoke in detail about the upcoming WTO Ministerial meeting in Geneva next month, where we will celebrate 50 years of post-war global growth. We will begin to chart a course for the WTO's future agenda and direct the General Council to start the necessary preparations for negotiations that are to begin before the end of the century in agriculture and services, among other areas. There is great enthusiasm for continuing the WTO's important work and we have an opportunity over the next 18 months to define the agenda." Ambassador Barshefsky said, "Concrete steps taken here at the OECD and in the WTO to improve transparency, including in dispute settlement proceedings, and to broaden our consultations to include all stakeholders in the process are essential to our overall success."

Trade and Labor

Ambassador Barshefsky welcomed the reaffirmation by our trading partners of the importance of core labor standards. She looks forward to the ILO meetings in June where it is hoped agreement will be reached on a declaration on core labor standards and on a monitoring mechanism.

Climate Change

Ambassador Barshefsky stated, "I am pleased that the OECD will be undertaking important analysis of how countries can most economically meet Kyoto climate change targets and that the OECD will be engaging developing countries in this work."

Electronic Commerce

"I am very pleased that my colleagues in other governments decided to work toward an agreement on global electronic commerce issues in the WTO," Ambassador Barshefsky said

referring the OECD Ministers' decision taken during the meeting that ended today, "There are a number of proposals on global electronic commerce pending in the WTO, and OECD countries recognize that it will be important to reach agreement on customs duty-free cyberspace as well as a future work plan." She also noted that the Canadians will host a conference on global electronic commerce in October 1998.

Multilateral Agreement on Investment

Ambassador Barshefsky reaffirmed her commitment to obtaining a good Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) stating, "While we have made considerable progress, we are looking for a very high quality agreement. More work still needs to be done, I urge negotiators to maintain serious, steady work." The next formal negotiating session will be in October and negotiations will conclude when feasible. We will continue to work with the NGOs and other interested groups.